

**U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**  
**CONTINGENCY PLAN Q & A DOCUMENT**  
**APRIL 8, 2011**

We continue to hope that Congress will reach an agreement to avoid a government shutdown, but we are working to prepare for all possible scenarios. The following document provides information about the USGS's contingency plans in the event of a government shutdown.

**What essential functions will the USGS continue to perform?**

The USGS has identified 200 employees to be retained who are needed to provide leadership and mission support for the protection of life and property, as well as 200 who will be on-call in the event of a national disaster or emergency. The USGS will continue to provide for:

- Emergency Flood Response by providing data to emergency flood managers and for flood forecast & flood warnings.
- Scientific laboratories to remain open on limited basis in order to maintain operations of critical and costly research experiments and to ensure proper functioning of equipment to maintain integrity of samples.
- The Earthquake Hazards Program will have limited NEIC staff to continue 24/7 monitoring.
- Maintenance of the TRIGA Nuclear Reactor.
- Biological Threat Coordination: Emergency Response in event of wildlife mortality event or pandemic
- Landsat 7 Satellite Operations to ensure the protection and maintenance of government property.
- National Ice Core Labs (NICL) maintenance one-of-a-kind facility for storing meteoric ice cores essential for research.
- Volcano Observatories in order to monitor on-going volcanic activity
- Keeping research specimens alive and maintaining and feeding animals and detection and analysis of zoonotic threats in wildlife
- The Saltwater Intrusion Drilling Project in Hilton Head, SC by maintaining operations of critical and costly research experiments.

**What USGS research will be slowed by the government shutdown?**

- Key global commodity data & water quality data analysis and dissemination.
- Research activities to restore the Chesapeake Bay, to restore the endangered whooping crane to the wild, and to monitor and assess the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
- Preparations for seafloor surveys to identify offshore mineral resources.
- Evaluation of hazards to nuclear plants.
- Scientific studies to establish the outer limits of US extended continental shelf.

- Seismic network stations would not be maintained; quality and timeliness of earthquake and volcano information would degrade with time.
- Data compilation by the USGS in April or May of each year and needed to assist with NOAA's annual prediction of the size of the hypoxic, or dead zone, caused by nutrient runoff, that affects the Gulf of Mexico off the Coast of Louisiana and Texas, would be impacted.

**What are some other impacts to citizens?**

- Without constant maintenance and calibration the USGS monitoring devices will no longer produce accurate water quality data.
- Inquiries from reporters and the public will not be answered & outreach activities at USGS offices nationwide will be discontinued. 1-800-USGS-ASK will not be operating.
- Access to publications, maps, and data will be limited.